

## Civic Engagement through Writing

*Faction*

### Common Core Alignment

*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1*: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.9*: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

### Summary

Faction is the intersection between factual research and imagination. Emulating historical fiction and science fiction, Faction asks students to research a topic thoroughly, and then write a story around the facts in an entertaining way. In lieu of a five paragraph research essay, Faction can be a guided research assignment. In that format, students are given three to five quality primary sources or articles on a topic, and from the perspective of a character linked to the topic, write diary entries, letters, plays, etc. based on a fictional life. Research can be indicated through citations.

### Teaching and Learning Purposes

- When: As an alternative assignment, or as a guided research project, as a chance for students to personalize their learning, and as a way of engaging students more in critical literacy and historical perspective.
- Topic Search: Lead students through the process of creating a list, gradually releasing the control to the students until they can select their own research topic with general criteria.

Adapted from *Content Area Writing* by Harvey Daniels, et. al.

1920's Research Project- <i>The Great Gatsby</i> Possible Faction Topics			
-American economy in the 1920s	-Red Scare	-Birth of a Nation- film	-Admiral Byrd
-Stock market crash	-F. Scott Fitzgerald	-Flappers	-The Cotton Club
-Racial violence and the Ku Klux Klan	-Harlem Renaissance	-Prohibition	-Popular music
-Al Capone	-Popular dances: Charleston, jitterbug	-Organized crime, gangsters	-Ziegfeld Follies
-Henry Ford	black bottom, shimmy, breakaway	-Herbert Hoover	-Art deco
-Scope Trial	-Elliot Ness	-Inventions of the 1920s	-Fats Waller
-Charles Lindbergh	-Jazz music	-Charlie Parker	-Vaudeville
-Rudolph Valentino			-Silent movies

- Identify the Audience:
  1. You, the teacher
  2. The students
  3. “Whom might this Faction influence, living or dead, real or imagined?”
- Research: Depending on the length of the assignment, a few good resources will do, the operative word of course being *good*. Guided research is best and preliminary planning can drastically improve your students’ work. Scouring the internet ahead of time, teaching kids to evaluate websites, and giving kids a list of a few websites to choose can make a world of difference.
- Prewriting:
  - Age, Social Status, Occupation, Education, Background, Gender, Goals, hopes, dreams
  - Impact of the researched information upon the character’s life
- Drafting:
  - The first draft should be written in class for the teacher
  - Have students read aloud what they have completed in 30 minutes
  - Use peer editing groups if you have some in place. Build out the rubric as a class so that expectations are clear
- Revising:
  - Sufficient evidence of quality research
  - Imaginative yet still accurate characterization and attention to the incident and detail
  - Split the revision process into two separate days
  - Don’t forget citation

### Primary source

Remarks on East-West Relations at the Brandenburg Gate in West Berlin, June 12, 1987

<http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1987/061287d.htm>

### Remember

The first Faction assignment that you ask your students to do might be highly guided but can eventually be more independent. Whenever a student chooses their own topics, they have increased investment. The optimal situation is when students do not even have a list. Class time can be devoted to discussion of the research.

### Possible Variations

1. Have students review chapters in textbooks, paying special attention to the items highlighted in bold. They can make their own list of topics from there.
2. Identify good websites related to a general topic and have students choose their Faction research topic from that site.

### Reflection

How might you adapt this pedagogy to use with YOUR content and YOUR students?